



## When you Call an Agency for Help



There are many agencies whose job is assisting you in times of crisis. Though you may be under great stress, following these tips can save you time and frustration.

**Be specific.** Know what you are looking for before you call. Explain your problem or need clearly.

**Be polite but firm.** Don't lose your temper and hang up. Even if the person you're speaking with cannot help you directly, ask, "Can you tell me of another resource that might be of help?"

**Try to call in the morning.** This may be a good time to reach the agency personnel you need.

**Don't apologize when asking for help.** If you or a person you are calling for cannot afford even a minimal fee, say so. Many agencies have financial support available for the low income family or person. Some agencies may also have free volunteer services.

**Get the name of everyone you talk with.** If someone is rude or refuses to help, don't lose your temper. Remain calm, but demand to talk with the supervisor.

**Be prepared.** If the agency requires an information gathering interview, ask what they require and take all relevant legal and financial papers with you to the meeting. If you feel overwhelmed, take someone with you.

If necessary, take notes. Be sure you understand what is going to happen and what your responsibilities in the situation will be, including those of a financial or legal nature.

**Be assertive but patient.** If you persist, you'll get information you need, or at least be on the right track.

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